

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY!

Natural areas present hazards. Rocks roll, trees topple, and limbs drop without warning. Wild animals, uneven ground, and changing weather can pose dangers. People may create other hazards through campfires, traffic, snowplay, and poor decisions.

Water is the main cause of death here. Many drowning victims were walking or climbing near rivers and unexpectedly fell in.

The Park Service works to reduce risks, but your safety is in your own hands. Keep alert. Read warnings and ask a ranger for advice.

Be Safe!

DROWNING is the #1 cause of death in national parks!

Be extra careful along rivers and streams; falling in is as dangerous as swimming. Once in a river, getting out can be nearly impossible. Rocks are smooth and slippery; swift, cold water rapidly saps your strength.

PLAGUE: Please do not feed or touch ANY park animals. Fleas on rodents can carry plague. Deer mice feces can carry hantavirus.

POISON OAK: This common shrub grows up to 5000 feet elevation. Leaves in groups of three are red with whitish berries in summer, bare in fall & winter; shiny green in spring. If you touch any part of the plant, wash skin and clothes right away.



TICKS: Common in foothill and Kings Canyon grasses; check yourself after a walk. Their bite is painless, but a small percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove them carefully with tweezers; seek a doctor's advice.

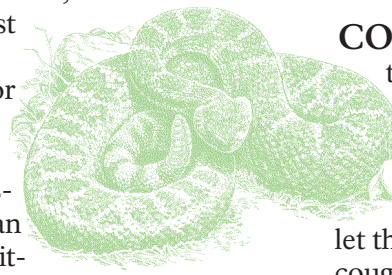


GIARDIA in lakes and streams can cause intestinal upset. Iodine and other chemicals may not be as reliable as heat in killing bacteria and Giardia, but can be effective if used properly. Boil drinking water at least 3 minutes.

HYPOTHERMIA: This life-threatening condition can occur year-round. Stay dry and snack often. If others don't respond to the need for warmer clothes or are stumbling, forgetful, or extremely tired and drowsy, get warm sugary drinks into them immediately. Get them into dry clothing, sleeping bags, and shelter.

RATTLESNAKES are especially common in the foothills. Watch where you put your hands and feet! They are protected; do not kill them. Most bites result from teasing or handling.

Very few people die, but tissue damage can be severe. If bitten, avoid panic; call a ranger or 911.



LIGHTNING: If you see dark clouds or lightning or hear thunder, get inside a large building or a vehicle (not convertible), if possible. Do not stand under trees or in shallow caves. Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape such as standing on a ridge, on Moro Rock, or in open meadows. Stay away from open water, wire fences, and metal railings, which can carry lightning from a distance.

WEST NILE VIRUS is passed by bites from infected mosquitos. Human illness is not common, but take steps to avoid mosquito bites.

CARBON MONOXIDE: This odorless, colorless gas can be fatal. Never burn charcoal in closed spaces such as a tent, camper, or RV.

OZONE POLLUTION: See air-quality index forecasts in visitor centers. Most ozone rises into the Sierra on warm winds. Levels of this colorless gas are highest May to October, peaking in late afternoon. These peaks sometimes reach "unhealthy" state and federal standards and can affect respiratory systems. Ozone forms from gases in car and factory exhaust.

CELL PHONES rarely work well in these mountains; don't rely on them. Note where pay telephones are available (see pages 8 & 9).

COUGARS roam throughout the parks, but chances of seeing one are very small. They rarely attack people and pets, but be aware. Avoid hiking alone.

Watch children closely; never let them run ahead. If you see a cougar, the goal is to convince it that you are not prey and may be dangerous to it:

- Don't run. Cougars associate running with prey and give chase.
- Try to appear as large as possible. Don't crouch or try to hide.
- Hold your ground or back away slowly while facing the lion.
- Pick up children.
- If the lion acts aggressively, wave your hands, shout, and throw stones or sticks at it.
- If attacked, fight back!
- Report any cougar sightings.

EXPLORE SAFELY: Avoid going alone. Tell someone your plans and return time. Keep your eyes and ears open for potential hazards above and around you. Slow down and share roads and trails with people and wildlife.

SAFE DRINKING WATER: The parks' 13 water systems are tested to ensure that they meet state and federal standards. Annual Consumer Confidence Reports are available at visitor centers.

OPERATION NO-GROW

• Prevent illegal marijuana growing! Keep parks safe, natural, and free from illegal activities! Report suspicious activities: 1-888-NPS-CRIME.

Rules of the road

SLOW DOWN FOR WILDLIFE and never feed animals along the road! They often get hit by cars if they stay on roadsides.

DON'T LOSE YOUR BRAKES Frequent braking + warm weather causes overheating and brake failure. Always downshift when going downhill. In automatic vehicles, put the gearshift on 1, 2 or L. The engine gets louder as it slows the car down, but it will save your brakes.

AVOID OVERHEATING Watch the engine temperature gauge. If it starts to go up, especially when going up hill, turn off the air conditioner and turn on the fan. If the engine fails, pull into a paved area, lift the hood, and wait a while. If the problem is vapor lock, this may take care of it.

FINDING GASOLINE

No gas stations lie within park boundaries. Only Grant Grove market sells cans of emergency gas. Fill up in Three Rivers, Clingan's Junction, or in the National Forest at:

- Hume Lake Christian Camp 559-335-2000: Year-round 24 hours with credit card. 11 miles (18 km) north of Grant Grove via Hwy 180.
- Stony Creek Village 1-559-565-3909: Available 24 hours with credit card. Between Wuksachi & Grant Grove on the Generals Hwy.
- Kings Canyon Lodge 1-559-335-2405: Gas sales usually 9am-dark, call to confirm. 17 miles (27 km) north from Grant Grove on Hwy 180.

MOTORCYCLES

Avoid oil buildup on pavement.

NARROW, WINDING ROADS

IN KINGS CANYON & NATIONAL FOREST/ SEQUOIA MONUMENT – Hwy 180; Panoramic Point & Redwood Mountain (NPS), & Big Meadows, Quail Flat/Ten Mile, Converse Basin (FS).

IN SEQUOIA – **Crystal Cave Road:** Maximum vehicle length 22' (6.7m). **Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow Road:** During shuttle season 5/21-9/1, single vehicles more than 22 feet long and combination vehicles are prohibited. Exception if valid disabled-parking placards are displayed. No water available. **Mineral King Road:** RVs & trailers not recommended (not permitted in campgrounds). No drinking water available. **South Fork & Middle Fork Roads:** Partially unpaved. Slippery when wet.

PREVENT CAR FIRES, PROTECT PLANTS & SOILS, & LET OTHERS PASS Use paved turnouts only.

LENGTH ADVISORY

On 12 narrow miles from Potwisha Campground to Giant Forest Museum in Sequoia Park, advised maximum vehicle length is 22 feet (6.7m). Maximum limit on the Generals Highway is 40 feet (12 m) for single vehicles, 50 feet (15 m) for vehicles plus a towed unit. Alternative: Hwy 180 from Fresno is straighter, less steep, & wider. Towing a car? Stay in the foothills; use the car to explore.

EMERGENCY CAR REPAIRS

For a tow: Call 565-3341 then press zero (24 hours). In Sequoia Park only, AAA is available for out-of-gas, lock outs, jump starts, minor repairs: Call 565-4070 (24 hours).

BICYCLES

Ride only on roads (not trails), single file, with traffic, and wear light colors after dark. People under 18 must wear a helmet.